I CLAIM:

1. A generator for a coin mechanism, comprising

a stator,

a rotor positioned to rotate within or about the stator,

one of the rotor and the stator comprising at least one magnetic element and the other of the rotor and the stator comprising at least one coil, and

a drive wheel being biased to a rest position by a biasing element and rotatable to a release position, the drive wheel being selectively rotationally coupled to the rotor such that when the drive wheel is rotated to the release position and released, the drive wheel drives the rotor as the drive wheel returns to the rest position,

whereby as the rotor rotates the generator generates an electric current.

2. The generator of claim 1 in which the drive wheel releases from the rotor as the drive wheel reaches the rest position.

3. The generator of claim 2 in which the drive wheel is rotationally coupled to the rotor by at least one pawl engaging at least one tooth.

4. The generator of claim 3 in which the pawl is biased to a position clear of the tooth and pivots to engage the tooth as the drive wheel starts to rotate to the rest position.

5. The generator of claim 1 in which the drive wheel engages the rotor at the release position.

6. The generator of claim 1 in which the wheel is biased to the rest position by at least one spring.

7. The generator of claim 1 in which the wheel is biased to the rest position by a pair of tension springs anchored to the wheel in substantially diametric relation.

8. The generator of claim 7 in which the tension springs wind into a groove formed in the periphery of the wheel.

9. The generator of claim 1 in which the generator is disposed in a coin mechanism and the wheel is rotated by a depressable member engaging a rotating portion of a coin mechanism.

10. The generator of claim 9 in which the wheel is released by a stationary projecting member which depresses the depressable member as the wheel reaches the release position, to disengage the depressable member from the rotating portion of the coin mechanism.

11. The generator of claim 1 in which the coil is on the stator.

12. The generator of claim 11 in which the stator comprises a pair of coils.

13. A coin mechanism, comprising

a rotatable handle,

a coin carrier rotatable with the handle when a particular type of coin or token is deposited into the coin carrier, coupled to a first driving member, and

a generator comprising a stator and a rotor positioned to rotate within or about the stator, one of the rotor and the stator comprising at least one magnetic element and the other of the rotor and the stator comprising at least one coil, and a drive wheel being biased to a rest position by a biasing element and rotatable to a release position by a second driving member cooperating with the first driving member, the drive wheel being selectively rotationally coupled to the rotor such that when the drive wheel is rotated to the release position and released, the drive wheel drives the rotor as the drive wheel returns to the rest position, whereby as the rotor rotates the generator generates an electric current.

14. The coin mechanism of claim 13 in which the drive wheel releases from the rotor as the drive wheel reaches the rest position.

15. The coin mechanism of claim 14 in which the drive wheel is rotationally coupled to the rotor by at least one pawl engaging at least one tooth.

16. The coin mechanism of claim 15 in which the pawl is biased to a position clear of the tooth and pivots to engage the tooth as the drive wheel starts to rotate to the rest position.

17. The coin mechanism of claim 13 in which the drive wheel engages the rotor at the release position.

18. The coin mechanism of claim 13 in which the wheel is biased to the rest position by at least one spring.

19. The coin mechanism of claim 13 in which the wheel is biased to the rest position by a pair of tension springs anchored to the wheel in substantially diametric relation.

20. The coin mechanism of claim 19 in which the tension springs wind into a groove formed in the periphery of the wheel.

21. The coin mechanism of claim 13 in which the wheel is released by a stationary projecting member which depresses the depressible member as the wheel reaches the release position, to disengage the depressible member from the rotating portion of the coin mechanism.

22. The coin mechanism of claim 13 in which the coil is on the stator.

23. The coin mechanism of claim 22 in which the stator comprises a pair of coils.

24. The coin mechanism of claim 13 in which the coin mechanism further provides

a rotating member that rotates with the coin carrier,

a rocker arm biased to a locking position latched to the rotating member to prevent rotation of the coin carrier,

one of an electromagnet or a permanent magnet on the rocker arm, the other of the electromagnet or a permanent magnet disposed adjacent to the rocker arm in a position such that when the electromagnet is activated the rocker arm can be attracted to the permanent magnet, and

a contact adjacent to the coin carrier,

whereby when a metal coin or token is deposited into the coin carrier the contact touches the coin and closes a circuit which activates the electromagnet to attract the rocker arm to the permanent magnet and draw the rocker arm away from the rotating member to release the coin carrier and allow the coin mechanism to be rotated.

25. A method of generating an electric current using a generator comprising a stator and a rotor positioned to rotate within or about the stator, one of the rotor and the stator comprising at least one magnetic element and the other of the rotor and the stator comprising at least one coil, comprising the steps of:

a. biasing a drive wheel to a rest position,

b. rotating the drive wheel to a release position,

c. before, during or after steps a. and b., coupling the drive wheel to the rotor, and

d. releasing the drive wheel,

whereby after release the drive wheel drives the rotor as the drive wheel returns to the rest position.

26. A metal detection and release system for a coin mechanism having a rotatable handle and a coin carrier rotatable with the handle when a particular type of coin or token is deposited into the coin carrier, comprising

a rotating member that rotates with the coin carrier,

a rocker arm biased to a locking position latched to the rotating member to prevent rotation of the coin carrier,

one of an electromagnet or a permanent magnet on the rocker arm, the other of the electromagnet or a permanent magnet disposed adjacent to the rocker arm in a position such that when the electromagnet is activated the rocker arm can be attracted to the permanent magnet, and

a contact adjacent to the coin carrier,

whereby when a metal coin or token is deposited into the coin carrier the contact touches the coin and closes a circuit which activates the electromagnet to attract the rocker arm to the permanent magnet and draw the rocker arm away from the rotating member to release the coin carrier and allow the coin mechanism to be rotated.